

SC033919

Registered provider: London Borough of Harrow

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a local authority and provides a short-break service for up to five children with learning and/or physical disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in 2024.

The registered provider has recently appointed a new responsible individual, and we are currently checking this person has the relevant capacity, experience and skills to carry out the role.

At the time of this inspection, 23 children were using the service. Two children were staying overnight, while one child was visiting for the evening.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 March 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
---	-------------

How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
---	------

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
---	------

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 21 August 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/08/2023	Full	Good
12/10/2022	Full	Good
23/06/2021	Full	Outstanding
23/07/2019	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy positive and trusting relationships with staff, and they are happy in the home. They receive care from skilled and compassionate staff, who are highly valued by parents. One parent described the home as being like a 'second home' for their child, highlighting the nurturing environment provided.

Children make considerable progress from their starting points. A gradual introduction process is in place to ensure that children feel comfortable before staying overnight. This process is flexible and adapted to each child's needs, allowing as much time as necessary for them to feel happy and settled. During this period, staff also support children in building friendships with their peers, fostering a sense of belonging.

Some children in the home do not use verbal communication. Staff support these children by using various methods, such as picture references, Signalong, and social stories, to facilitate communication. Children also use pictures to express their preferences when choosing activities inside and outside the home. Staff plan engaging activities that encourage children to learn by exploring new experiences. For example, some children have had the opportunity to use public transport and visit a pub, helping them develop confidence and life skills.

School plays a vital role in children's daily routines. When children stay at the home, staff help them to prepare for school and ensure that they arrive on time. A social worker commended the staff's efforts in supporting a child's punctual school attendance. Staff also help children work towards goals agreed on with their parents and teachers, providing consistent guidance and encouragement. The staff celebrate children's achievements by giving awards and acknowledging their successes, creating an uplifting environment that fosters growth and positivity.

The home is warm and inviting. Staff put significant effort into planning children's overnight stays, ensuring that they can use their preferred bedrooms. Children have access to books, games and toys for their enjoyment, and they love spending time in the sensory room. They also have fun playing in the garden, which has bikes, a swing and a playhouse. Events such as garden parties, Christmas parties, and coffee mornings help create a strong sense of community.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Children are kept safe in the home. Staff receive training to help them maintain children's safety and well-being. Managers work closely with parents and social workers to reduce risks and to ensure that children are protected.

Staff are skilled at supporting children when they become upset. They use a calm and reassuring approach to help children relax and feel happy. This proactive method

minimises the need for staff to use approved holds to prevent injuries. When such incidents occur, managers review them thoroughly to learn and implement measures to prevent future occurrences.

Staff manage children's medication efficiently to support their health. They have a clear and effective system to record when children bring medication to the home and when staff administer it.

Recruitment practices have improved. Managers check gaps in staff employment history to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager leads the home with the support of two deputy managers. Together, clearly understand of the home's strengths and areas for improvement. Despite a change in the responsible individual, the manager's performance stays unaffected due to the effective support provided by other senior managers. Both managers and staff take pride in children's progress, and a stable team ensures the delivery of consistent care.

The registered manager has implemented robust processes to assess the quality of care provided in the home. Feedback from the independent visitor after each visit is used to make improvements, ensuring that the home continues to offer safe and nurturing care for the children.

Staff enjoy working at the home and feel well supported by their managers. They receive quality training to prepare them for their roles. However, more specialised training is not always secured to enhance staff understanding of children's specific needs. Staff receive regular supervision sessions and attend team meetings. Managers address concerns about staff practice effectively.

Staff work with children's parents and other professionals. This helps them to plan individual and nurturing care for the children. One social worker commented that staff worked well with another care agency to plan consistent care for a child. However, staff do not always use language in children's care records that takes account of their age.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that information about children is recorded in language that is respectful and appropriate for the child's age and understanding. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are equipped with the necessary training and skills to meet the needs of children with learning disabilities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC033919

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Harrow Council Hub, Forward Drive, Harrow HA3 8NT

Responsible individual: Post vacant

Registered manager: Michalina Paszkowska

Inspector

Thobekile Bandama, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025